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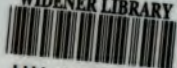
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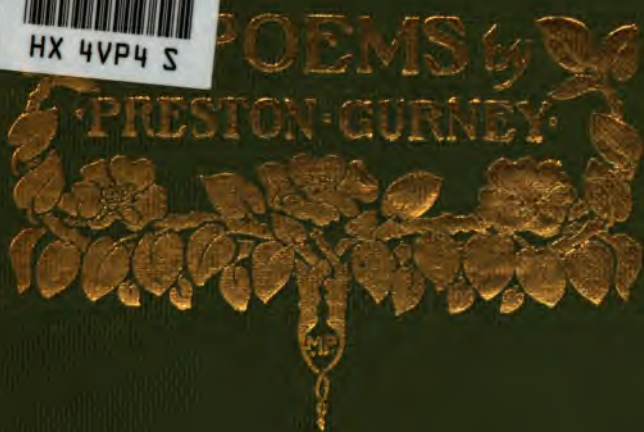
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Harvard College Library

FROM

Col. T. H. Higginson

BRIERS OF WILD-ROSE

To Col. T. W. Higginson
with Author's kind
regards, as to one
not known, and yet well
known.

Preston Gurney.

..

BRIERS OF WILD-ROSE

Poems

BY

PRESTON GURNEY

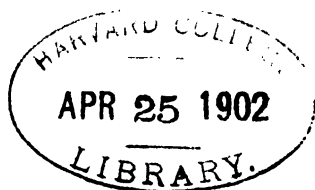
"Sunshine cannot bleach the snow,
Nor time unmake what poets know"

WOLLASTON HEIGHTS, MASS.

1901

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Col J.W. Eliquison

To my Wife

MARIA S. (HAWES) GURNEY

**IN MEMORY OF MANY HAPPY LITERARY HOURS
I AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATE THIS
VOLUME OF VERSE**

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(Musa loquitur)

**"I hung my verses in the wind :
Time and tide their faults may find."**

Emerson.

**Grasses bent with honey dew
Teach a lesson sage and true.
Blessings oft their souls bow low,
On whom the gods best gifts bestow.**

A BRIER OF WILD ROSE

ROSSES wild, bloom of brier,
 Pasture and hedge aglow with fire,
 Not of flame, but of red,
 From all sunsets borrowèd.
 No, not red, not red, but rose,—
 Flush of flower-light, glint that shows
 'Midst the green of shrubs around,
 Like burning bush on holy ground.

Unpretending, simple, whence
 Thy sweet blush of innocence?
 More commanding so my heart
 Than all boasts of gardener's art.
 Would my rhymes might bloom like thee,
 Wild rose-misted briery,
 Fair with thy sincerity.
 Might my muse thy favor bear,
 A wild rose should deck her hair.

THE PAST TENSE.

All things have the tenses three,—
Future, present, past.

In the first they glow or gloom ;
In the second fill the room ;
In the third repose at last,
As in a splendid tomb.

Only when the *past* is reached
Settles calm upon the soul.
Something over goes to sleep
While endless ages roll.
Dread we endings ? These are best,
And sanctify the whole.

REVERIE.

When the mind, unmoored, floats as on the
air,
While halcyon winds breath over her
And waft her everywhere ;
And things most loved do glimmer in Indian
summer haze ;
And loses consciousness the soul, as in a mute
amaze ;
And in the eyes light shineth, far off as moun-
tains dim ;
And if one speaks, his words, aloof, in absent
ears do swim,—
That's reverie, whose holy spell
Fancy's children pleaseth well.

BEAUTY UNIQUE.

Whatever normal and true
Flowers after its kind is fair ;
Though it break every rule of the schools,
Look at a god in it there.

Seen through a visage its own,
Different from aught beside ;
Were it from the universe gone,
Poorer the world in its pride.

A mould of divinity lost.
Love it. Don't say it's unlike
Somewhat else your pathway had crost.
No disparagement note of the other
But this, too, is fair ;
Though it break every rule of the schools,
Look at a god in it there.

FIRE.

Fire, fire, fire,
Light, light, light,
Bright, bright, bright.
 Touch thee who dare,
 Punishment dire.
Fire, fire, fire.

Flame pure and white,
Cosey, dear delight,
Shining through the night.
(By my three thumbs,
"A Window in Thrums.")
 Candle afar
 Clear as a star,
 To all who roam
 Beacon of home.

NUBIA.

"A sad, solitary, sunny world."— *Curtis*.

Far up the Nile, up the Nile,
 Lotus-shored behind, before,
 Lies a region sunny, sad,
 Desert-girdled evermore.
 Sakia-saved from sun and sand,
 Silent, solitary land.

Nubia! Oft in fancy's boat
 From a world of strife and steam
 Sail I on, until I reach
 Thy trancèd shores of dream.
 Sakia-saved from sun and sand,
 Silent, solitary land.

MOAB.

Eastern land of slumbrous charm,
Lonesome name on Bible page,
Hilly, weary, desolate,
The same from age to age ;

No one goeth e'er so far,
Farther thou than farthest pole ;
With remoteness not of miles,
Dim distances of soul.

Moab, when I fain would sleep,
Pillow thou my weary head.
Moab, Moab ! say I o'er,
Till care is banishèd.

Sink I so in blank repose,
Far as thou from noise and strife.
I'm in Moab-land and share
Its dreamless death in life.

CRUCIAL DAYS.

Most days are hummed
To the same old tune,
Nor offer other chances ;
A few days though,
Or late or soon,
Compel retreats
Or advances ;
And these mean more
Than a hundred days
Of ordinary sinning,
Since those that follow
Ape their ways
To tunes of their beginning.

Who passes well
Life's crucial days
Sets all to heavenly music.
Who doesn't so,
But does them ill,
Makes all his
Living too sick.

SKY.

Live we under the sky
Until we die,
Naught *is* sky,
Save to the eye.
Sky, it would seem,
Is Nature's dream.

When the body is under the sod,
When the soul is with its God,
Will sky transcend
And over all bend,—
A semblance above?
That is to prove.

TO-DAY.

To-day. At last thou'rt here :
I've journeyed many a year,
Had for thee many a fear,
And many a hope most dear.

To-day. We greet at last :
All yesterdays are past.
Now, now unveil thy face !
Grant me thy boon and grace.

To-day. I see thee same,
As days through which I came ;
Thou'lt soon be gone, as they,
The same returnless way.

To-day. Oh, that I knew
What with thee now to do ;
Thou'rt on my hands till night,
God help me use thee right.

CAGES.

Birds, we notice, get inside them.
 Men and boys cannot abide them.
 How do they know who haven't tried them?

Cages. Tried them? who that hasn't?
 Sometime,— either past or present,—
 Rich and poor, and king and peasant.

Cages. Not of wire of gilt
 Are these souls abide in built.
 Built of faculties dire bounds :
 Built of dollars and of pounds.
Limits! limits, a hundred rounds,
 Hast *none*, mortal? Zounds! Zounds!

All is limit,— cage, cage, cage,—
All is — all, from youth to age.

Sing inside thy cage, O man,
 Be its name Beersheba or Dan.

THE DEMISE OF WORRY.

Worry is death to the soul.
 God, who is over the whole,
 Worrieth never : that's why
 His throne is the earth and the sky.

Sin he seeth enough,
 And evil is gnarled and tough.
 He joyeth to strive and to win,—
 Worry not Himself, but the sin.

That's the cue
 For me and for you.
 Put Worry under the sod :
 Live without it, worthy of God.

Toll the bell. Where Worry lies dead
 The soul's rose shall blossom in red,
 And the world where worriment creeps
 Rise heavenward by bounds and by leaps.

THREE DEGREES.

Life was a beck ;
 Limpid, shallow,
 Gurgling o'er its bed :
 One might step over
 (Over-stepping),
 Stepping over. Many did.

Life was a river :
 Anon, anon,
 Deeper, broader its flow :
 Banks still shoring it,—
 Business of duties,—
 Duties enough, I trow.

But the time came,
 Life grown vaster
 Left its banks behind forever.
 Now life is ocean,
 All vacation,—
 No more beck and no more river.

LANGUOR.

Things are bright,
 The world uproarious,
So I'm not.
 Heavy, dull, and
 Most inglorious :
 Well I wot.

Whether school keeps,
 Non-essential ;
 So it seems
 Wilted quite,
 Uninfluential,
 As vague dreams.

Languor, heavy-lidded,
 Noddeth weary
 (Weary),
 Half asleep.
 Spells narcotic,
 Working queerly
 (Queerly),
 O'er me creep.

LANGUOR

Why such moods are
Floats rejoinder
 Out of view.
I'm too languid
E'en to wonder;
 So, adieu.

A BAREFOOT RHYME.

That birds and beasties *wear no shoes*,
Saves something yearly
With which to pay some honest dues,
Than some more nearly.

Whose minute moral is, no doubt,
If some folks bought more seldom,
They'd be some furloughs further out
Of bed — bed — bedlam.

NIMROD.

Hunting, snaring in woods I go *not* of late.
 Let quail and partridge breed there, up to
 date,
 And hare and woodchuck, ditto, of old age die,
 If not trapped or otherwise Nimrod's rage by.
 But there's game, too, / hunt in the thicket
 Of the mind-wood,— hide and seek and try to
 trick it.

THOUGHTS,— live, wild, evasive sinners,
 Fit for literati's dinners ;
 Thoughts I've scented as hounds do rabbit
 Where their kith and kin inhabit,
 Followed far off — nearer, nearer, *then lost*
 track ;
 Lost the game I thought I's sure of,— turned
 back ;
 Knowing thought *is* in the tangle, for I spied it ;
 But by fate, forbidding, was denied it.

That's why *vacant* thus this verse is :
 Well, let's think hard of our mercies.

WHAT TO MAKE OF IT?

That I do not know.
 Who does, I wonder?
 Half the time I'm in a maze
 At this or that blunder.

Freak, caprice, orchid
 Wild,— all so queer
 And out of reason
 In the garden of the year.

Why a butterfly's all wings?
 Why a zebra's hundred rings?
 Why croak of frog, and caw of crows?
What to make of it? Who knows?

Why useless folk live on and on
 To plague the lives out of their betters?
 Why scamps go free, at times,
 And saints wear fetters?

Why homely humans flourish so,
 And angels under the daisies go?

WHAT TO MAKE OF IT?

What to make of it? Ho, ho,
That is what I do not know.

All who do *stand* in a row
Under a tree,
And counted be.
Ho, ho !

TRANSPARENCE.

Some things transparent be,
 Of which we're glad.
 That most are not need make
 No mortal sad.
 Glass, crystal, water, air
 We scarcely see,
 So traversed by the light they be.

If all were so, rocks,
 Hills, and trees,
 Beasts, birds, and
 Fishes of all seas,
 And people, too, and
 Clothes they wear ;
 Teeth crystal, muscle,
 Bone, and hair,—
 Why, then, transparent 'twere,
 I take it,
 One prayer would rise
 To crystal skies,
 " Something opaque,
 O Lord, do make it ! "

OPACITY.

Transparent people oft we praise,
 Words, deeds, clear seen through all their
 days :

Their spirits crystalline as these.
 But this abatement surely needeth
 Glass souls. What chance of hidings sweet,
 Where modest shine and shadow meet,
 To captivate whoever heedeth?

Oh, something gothic dim and vast,—
 Opacity in souls to cast
 Shade over meanings, till appear
 Stars in the heavens of friends most dear,
 And night as well as day in those
 Upon whose hearts our hearts repose.

SERENITY.

A sunflower seems to me
 Of all flowers most *serene*,
 As tall and bright it stands,
 Tranquil with golden sheen,
 Still glowing to the sun,
 And turning slow
 To see him run his course,
 And past the zenith go
 Down, down the western slope
 Of heaven's high dome.
 Serene as sun the flower,
 All in its garden home.

I would my soul might be,
 O flower, serene as thee.
 What boots the fear, the fret —
 Tumultuous misery —
 That mortal minds beset !
 As well abide the hour,
 Sun-daft, like the sunflower,
 Whether in rough-set hedge
 Aglow, or Eden's bower.

BAFFLED.

My friend, you're much to me :
 But, somehow, when I surmise
 How or what I can devise
 To bring lustre to your eyes,
 And your heart lift to the skies,
 And your soul thrill with surprise,
 I am neither witty nor wise,
 Though you're much to me.

Baffled am I. All I say
 Takes a turn another way.
 Say I this, wish't had been that,
 As it failed joy to beget.
 Happy were I where I sit,
 Could I sometime chance to hit,
 The very vital spot in thee
 Would blossom to my ministry.

Happy were I not for my sake,
 Happy were I for thy own sake,
 'Twere my happiness to thine make.
 But somehow when I surmise
 How or what I can devise,
 I am neither witty nor wise.

BAFFLED ?

Baffled? Oh, no !

No, no ; no, no.

One there is, is silly quite,
 Thinks my stupid sayings bright,
 Chuckles o'er them day and night,
 Wonders how's, by second sight,
 I know the wrong thing from the right,
 And give the right thing to a dot,—
 Her heart its happy blossoming spot ;
 For somehow mine, its native juices
 Is nectar for her soul's best uses.
 There's no explaining how this be,
 Nor doubting its sweet mystery.

Baffled? Oh, no,

No, no ; no, no !

CHANGE.

Who resisteth change,
 Worstest shall he be ;
 Power there is that rends
 And rears eternally.
 Softly speak that power,
 My heart. My heart lie low
 Where storm uproots the oak,
 There see the violets grow.

Say not change is ill,
 Nature knoweth best.
 Something other is the end
 Of all things here possesst.
 Greet that other fair,
 Say to him, " My friend,"
 Listen what he says to thee,
 To his evangel bend.

Other children are in the schools
 Than those who used to be ;
 Other people in the houses,
 Than those we used to see ;

CHANGE

Others also buy and sell
In market and in mart.
Right, no doubt, these changes be,
Though they nigh break the heart.

THREE HOUSES.

Three houses along the road, in a row,
 Past which the whizzing electrics go ;
 Three houses as nearly *alike* as — well,
 As morning and noon and evening bell.
 If only the paint on them were similar,
 As like as Himmaleh to Himmaleh.
 You would not know, in passing the three,
 In *which* one lies on a bed of pain,
 Never to rise from it again.
 If you guessed, you'd two to one guess wrong.
 It's the *middle* house, where the griefs belong,
 That I know, for I've been inside :
 It's the *middle* house, as past you ride,
 Where a man lies at eternity's door !
 But the houses, as I said before,
 Are as like each other, as you spin by,
 As green lawn to green lawn, or blue sky to
 blue sky.

WHEN ONLY LOVE IS GONE.

What goes with love from life ?
Things stay we used to prize ;
But, without love, they altered be,
And only pain our eyes.
For the world looks blank,— estranged,
As numbly we grope on,
When only love is gone.

When Love's bright course is run,
Value of what remains
Is the lamp's without the flame,
The world's without the sun.

EXPRESSION.

Unrecorded, come and go
 Thoughts and passions of the mind.
 On the form, the face, they gleam,
 But leave no trace behind.
 Are they transients of the soul?
 Have they worth, or are they vain?
 If they written were in books,
 Were it any gain?
 Thoughts and passions of the mind,
 Could they rightly be expressed,
 Might the veriest folly prove,
 Or wisdom's rare bequest.
 But to render these aright,
 True and vivid as they fly,
 Whose the poet's, artist's skill?
 They're born to die,
 Save as some one gifted highly,—
 Homer, Shakespeare, Browning, Shelley,—
 Does the business of expression,
 Gives the world its best possession.

MYSELF.

In the mirror look — whom to see ?

Somebody called me,

“Morning, neighbor I :

Have you in my eye ;

Hail, and good-bye.”

How got I to be the precious elf —

Myself ?

What to ancestry,

What to men and books,

What to babbling brooks,

What to sun and breeze,

What to lakes and seas,

What to air and food,

What to wold and wood,

What to soil and sod,

What to heaven and God,

Owe I of this *me* ?

Doth much puzzle me.

Here I stand tho',

In the land tho'.

Behave ! curious neighbor Ego ;

Or go to — Terra del Fuego.

UNRISEN DAYS.

One after another days rise from the East,
 Plenty still waiting their turn.
 What they'll be like, people are wondering,
 Anxious to see and to learn.

Oh, but those days which haven't arisen
 Will rehearse all the forms of the past,—
 Morning, noon-tide, and evening,— from first
 to the last.
 Strangely over them hover mists of the soul,
 Glowing with golden romances from pillar to
 pole.

Days rise,
 Souls greet them,
 Bravely meet them,
 As they mount to the
 Crystalline skies.

A FACE MORE.

There's a lamp lit on the shelf
That was not there before.
There's a fire new on the hearth
That glows the whole room o'er.
There's a house upon the hill
That wasn't there last year.
There's bird-song in the wood
We did not use to hear.
There's a *face* more in the world,
From some bright realm above,
That somehow brightens all
With the radiance of love.

A *face* — one more — 'neath the sky
(There were faces a crowd before):
All I know is, one face sheds
A glory from shore to shore.

A FACE LESS.

A lamp is gone from the shelf,
 Where it was wont to shine.
 A fire is gone from the hearth,
 Where erst its glow had been.
 A house is gone from the hill,
 Where a century it stood.
 A bird that used to sing
 Is gone from the leafy wood.
 A *face* is gone from this world
 To some bright realm of light,
 That somehow changeth here
 My cheerful day to night.

A *face* — one less — 'neath the sky
 (There remaineth of faces a crowd) :
 All I know is, with one face *went*
 A glory — under the shroud.

SURFACES.

Some things are 'tis best not probe.
 At the centre of the globe
 Night perpetual doth abide :
 Glooms abyssmal,
 Regions dismal,
 To no human hope allied.

On the surface, sunny, fair,
 Bloom of flowers, and vital air.

Thin the ice upon the lake :
 On it still thy pleasure take.
 Depths deep under, see them not :
 Some are dead who this forgot.
 Head 'bove water's safer far
 Than where sharks and mermaids are.

They who laugh and they who sing
 Keep the upper side of things ;
 Smell the flower, but leave the root,
 Undisturbed, beneath their foot.
 Mud at bottom they oft reach
 Who too profoundly teach or preach.

TRODDEN AND UNTRODDEN.

People have been here, thousands on thousands,

Through wind and through rain, through sun and through sleet ;

Been here and been here, over and over,

Till trodden the paths be 'neath their feet,

Trodden the paths be, where they journeyed,

Whose journeying now is over for aye.

Here their evidence through the green country,

Paths they have trod, which here do stay,—

Stay the paths, winding and footworn,

Worn here by feet that are gone away.

And there be regions *trackless* as ocean,

Where nobody's gone, or ever will go :

Nothing to go for,—regions so lonely,

Over which only wild winds blow ;

Whose feet no paths make, pathless forever,

Where nobody's gone, or ever will go.

Path-marked or *pathless*,—both have their pathos.

Which more pathetic? Does any one know?

INCONSPICUOUS.

Wilt wear a *scarlet* coat,
Or coat of hodden *gray*?
Wilt take all eyes with show,
Or, unobserved, glide by?

Wilt make no boast, no stir,
Or shout aloud your name?
Thou canst do either, sir:
Effects are not the same.

The scarlet coat, if worn,
Will target surely prove
To friend and foe alike,
As, flaming, on you move.

Your coat of gray will draw
Scarcely a single shot
Of either blame or praise.
Wilt wear it, then, or not?

In winter, o'er the snow,
In gray do rabbits run?

INCONSPICUOUS

If they in scarlet ran,
Their day would soon be done.

Attention to thyself
Can seldom do thee good.
Let roses wear the red,
My friend, I wish you would.

WIND IN THE TREE BOUGHS.

Wind in the tree boughs, stirring the leaves
of them,

Something's abroad that eyes do not see.

Wind, do thy mission, stirring the leaves of
them.

That is for beauty ; that is for me.

Wind in the tree boughs, ripple their verdure ;
Toss them and sway them thy own windy
way.

More's in the world that responds to thy bidding.
Through soul of my soul, a wind blows
to-day.

Leaves of my life rustle and ripple,—

Beauteous, astir, as leaves of a tree,—
Some life on my life making wind's music.

Listen, my heart, what it singeth in thee !
Singeth of countries far o'er the border,—

Border of night and zone of the day,—
Something that *far* is, far as the morning,
Far as the evening ; *near*, too, as God is
To hearts when they pray.

I WISH I KNEW.

I wish I knew a thing or two more than I do,
'Twould not, belike then, be so much as you
do.

But wouldn't you like to know a thing or two
More than you do?

I wish I knew what the bee thinks,
When he whiz, whizzes with his wings.

I wish I knew what the lark feels
When he soars and sings.

I wish I knew what heaven's like
Up on high.

I wish I knew what babies cry for,
When they cry.

I wish I knew if you *love* me, dear,
As I do you.

I wish I knew — a thing or two
More than I do.

HALF PAST THREE.

I see a little maid at play far on the hill.
 'Tis Tuesday,—half past three,—about thy
 age, I ween.
 Pretty little maid afar on the hill, on the
 grasses green,
 Playing in the sunbeams, bright and blithe as
 they,
 Would thy life might be gladsome as thy play,
 When 'tis *half past three in life's afternoon*.
 (Little maid, little maid, 'twill come full soon.)
 Do not be afraid. Play, little maid;
 Time will play with thee; play with time
 alway;
 As now, at half past three.

WHIP-POOR-WILL.

Mournful bird of the wood,
Who taught thee so to sing
Thy woful, plaintive mood
With twilight mingling?

What has poor Willie done
That thou should'st wish him ill?
Dost dread his little gun
That prowls behind the hill?

Is Willie very poor,
Poorer than you or me?
And, if they whip him more,
Then will he better be?

Thou know'st not, silly one,
What means thy lay;
That aught or stern or lone
Thy trills to us convey.

I've never seen thee, bird,
On rock or hill or tree.
As voice of night thy word,
Thy twilight minstrelsy.

INK.

Ink, in my inkstand, black,
Tell what 'tis you hide ;
There, in your night-dark well,
Thoughts, no doubt, abide.

Wait 'til I dip my pen ; *so* —
Now divulge them free.
Won't this morning ? No.
Art dour and glum ?
Well, please not always be
Both black and dumb.

SCHEVENINGEN.

Desolate sea, desolate shore,
 Sand, sand, sand-blown dunes,
 Winds that rove, and rave, and roar ;
 Berserker rages, sagas, runes,
 In a hundred windy tunes ;
 With sand in breath and giddy swirl,
 Round hills that shift and vary,
 In mindless wild vagary,
 In dervish spin and whirl.

Tufts of grasses light as plumes
 All the lonely land illumines ;
 Hills, a hundred, like to one
 As kine that graze, or bees that hum.
 And the people native here
 Like the land and sea appear,—
 Fluttered raiment, unkempt hair,
 As the grass these hillocks bear ;
 And their wooden huts behind
 Look as blown here by the wind.

Lonely country, at whose feet
 Wind and sand and salt sea meet.

DREAM MUSIC.

I dreamed a dream of what I would like,
 And how I would like it served.
 Needless to own, I attained it not,
 Nor its airy delight deserved ;
 For things as they are, are humdrum quite ;
 And hardly with credit bear the light,—
 Sedate and shady at times.

In my dream, I assure you, I wrote fine rhymes,
 Syllabled echoes ; word bells whose chimes
 Made melody far and wide,—
 Not for ears only, but *souls*, in realms where
 thoughts abide.

For a music *is* (in my dreams, I mean)
 That, if I could wakingly bring
 Forth into light of the common day,
 The song that in dreams I sing,
 You should hear, not this that buzzes away,
 But anthem rhythmic and free,
 “ As the bells of Shandon that sound so grand
 on
 The pleasant waters of the river Lee.”

THE INDIAN PIPE.

Orchis of the woodland dim,
 Pale bloom on stem as pale and slim
 As sprouts of tubers in the bin
 Of cellars dank and chill within,
 When spring with might at work outside,
 Forgets not these that *in* abide.

Oh, ghostly flora ! haunting forest glade,
 Scentless and spectral, are green growths
 afraid,
 When thou uprisest, mocking their delight
 With thy shroud-mantle in the pale moonlight ?

Yet charm is thine, for all who fear thee not,
 So unlike aught beside in grove or grot.
 To wonder what thou art, we halt to gaze
 As on a spirit-flower in woodland ways.

MODERATION.

To strike so hard as to
Break the whip
Hurts the whipper.

To trip so hard as
One's self to trip
Hurts the tripper.

Enough's enough ;
What's over spills,—
Loss to the spiller.

To overpay an
Honest debt,
Wastes the siller.

ROSES SENT BY M. D. P.

Roses rosy, sweetly rosy,
 Came through the mail,—
 Uncle Sam's fashion,—
 To my own door :
 A custom of M. D.
 Time immemorial,—
 All in a box, so,—
 She's done it before ;
 Nearly a score.

Not roses only, as
 I remember,
 But lilies of valley ; pinks, too,
 One birthday.
 This time 'tis roses
 Their bloom discloses :
 That is M. D.'s way.

What does she mean by it ?
 Cheer of our sorrow.
 O this sad summer !
Do roses bloom ?

ROSES SENT BY M. D. P.

Forgot I they did so,
Till on my table
These from her garden
Brightened my room.

I know not if roses have
Any mission
To hearts that are desolate,
Sad as my own.

They, too, have thorns on them,
Close to the roses,—
As I have these roses
Close to my thorns.

INDENTURES.

Indentures, on flat stones, over a roadside
brook,

Seen daily, when my way to school I took.

What language came they to possess for me !

In after years,— *then*, hardly more than
three,—

In after years, my eyes did fill to see

Those shallow hollows in the rocks, that be

Like something shapen so in memory,

And eloquent of morning mystery ;

Of days long gone, when oft I used to see

Those shapes of natural masonry.

I know not what they say to me ;

But might I find them in eternity,

A school-boy still I should become,

Hearing my earthly brooklet's hum

In gurglings near. For sake of which I fear

Ditties of seraphs then might fail to hold my
ear.

SOFT INVINCIBILITY.

Stone from the beach,—how smooth and
round !

Soft were the sands where I found thee ;
Soft were the waters around thee,
 That laved thee with musical sound ;
 Rocked thee and lulled thee for ages,
 Till thou art smoother than rhymes be ;
 Smoother, soothly, than mine be.
 Smooth as the rhymes be on pages
 Of Tennyson, Shelley, and Swinburne,—
 Like theirs, as thou hadst been twin-born.

Hard stone, soft influences shaped thee.
 These though forever escaped thee.
 Where on the soft sands thy shaping .
 What wave that washed thee was taking
 Thy impress ? Their yielding more mighty
 than granite.

(Who readeth thy rune may scan it.)

Invincible softness forever !

Hardness wastes its endeavor.
 Not only on beaches wave-moulded,

SOFT INVINCIBILITY

**But where souls be, that may have scolded,
Obdurate still and resistant,
Which gentleness softly insistent
Has rounded to shapes of delight
By love's invincible might.**

“ A shipwrecked sailor, buried on this coast,
 Bids you set sail.
 Full many a gallant ship, when we were lost,
 Weathered the gale.”

Theocritus.

Not out of date are successes.
 Few sink of the millions who sail.
 They who sink not blow no trumpets.
 For the few who went down in the gale
 Loud sounds the woe and the wailing.
 Venture ; be sure you *may* perish :
 Ten to one, you'll arrive and prevail.

Bravo ! for sailor who shipwrecked
 Proclaimed his *exceptional* ruin,
 To cheer, not dishearten his brothers,
 From daring and doing.

PROSPECT.

Prospect far and fair I see ;
To it nearer I'd not be.
With yonder wood I've naught to do ;
Its nymphs and driads I'll not woo.
And copse and glen and meadow floor,
I'd rather see than traverse o'er.
Were I to go where these all lie,
Lost were their prospect to my eye.
That's mine. The other may belong
To Captain Blake or Farmer Strong.

SMOKE.

All smoke isn't burnt,
More is the pity.
This is the substance
Of our ditty.

Some smoke up chimney goes,
Black belched forth,
Wind blown to east or west,
Or south or north,

Smutching the air. Some
'Scapes in house,
Choking the people most,
Both man and mouse.

Seems there no place for smoke,
Above, below.
Were it but burnt complete
'Twere better so.

And other smoke there is
Of human woe,

SMOKE

Of pains and troubles that
We mortals know,

Which, 'scaped upon the air,
Turns day to night.
Who *burns his own*, helps keep
This dark world bright.

AM I "IT" ?

That is the question, chief and single,
Of children, when in sports they mingle,

Am I it ?

Oh, I was "it" full many a time
When life was young as this new rhyme,

I was "it."

Sensations then, as I'm a sinner,
Was once a minute late to dinner

When I was "it."

For to be *it* was something thrillin'.

Might I be *it* again I'd rhyme,

"Barkis's willin'."

LIGHT.

What is light, I wonder.
Has no weight, no size,
No semblance, even of itself,
Were it not for eyes.

Eyes are queer machines.
Perfect though they be,
Without life behind the lens,
Naught they see.

What is light then, pray ?
Suns don't shine.
Eye and life and sun
Must combine.

Then something appears
Wondrous bright :
Has no weight, no size,—
I wonder what is light.

WEEDS.

Why God made *weeds*
Puzzles the wise.
Who knows — tell.
Who replies ?
Nobody offers ?
Dumb is the sphinx,
Deigns not to articulate
What he thinks.
Weeds, meanwhile, flourish,—
So they do.
Did the same God make them
That made you ?
Why he made *you*
Might puzzle the weed.
Theology's mixed,
It is, indeed.

A HOT DAY.

(June 28, 1901, 96° in shade.)

Waves of heat; glare of sun :
Simmering light all things upon.
Dream we of Labrador much as we can,
Aiding our fancy with rustle of fan.
Icebergs this minute bolster North Pole up.
Oh, for just one to cold storage our soul up !
Think we cool thoughts,—cooler, the hotter.
Drop one as ice into the water ;
Then quaff betimes. Oh, the relief of't,
This tropic day, tempering the grief of't.

SHADOWS.

Shadows of trees on the grass ;
Shadows of rustling green,
Cool in the noontide glare,
Spangles of light between ;
Cool to the eye that beholds
As ices to tongue.
Shadows, what are you so fair,
Rustling in grasses there,
Clovers and daisies among ?

Nothing they tell me you are —
Than something more rare.
One tree up in the air
Where the bird sings ;
One below on the lawn
Where the bird's shadow has wings.

A POSER.

**How to *end* what's begun
Is a poser.
Half who teach,
And half who preach,
Do not know, sir.**

**Fumble, mumble ;
Add some more ;
More tail to tail
That was before ;
And then appendix
To the caudal,
Making twaddle.**

**How to end what's begun
Is a poser.
Half who teach,
And half who preach,
Do not know, sir.**

FOG.

Cloud below, as cloud above ;
Cloud everywhere to-day.
Web no weaver ever wove,
Wet web of hodden gray.
Darkness light doth not illume,
Chill sepulchral as the tomb ;
Grove we through its nether gloom.
Dim and dubious day !
Misty morning, where's the broom
Can sweep a mist away ?
London, London, over the sea ;
In the same boat thou and we !
Oh, some wind, blow, blow, blow ;
Circulate above, below.
Sun shine, shine *through* !
Would thou might'st. Please do.

A SULTRY DAY.

Something like linen, when
Starch is gone out of't ;
Something like wet butterflies ;
Something like kittens dipped in a puddle,
And wiping wearisome eyes.
That's how we feel this blear sultry weather,
Neither living nor dead.
Willing to sit under some weeping willow,
With sundry gray hairs on our head,
And those that are not gray disconsolate.
Oh, for a breeze from North Pole !
Oh, for a whiff from Spitzbergen
To stiffen the thews of the soul !

STAY AND GO.

Do things that stay, and likewise go,
Include all things here below ?

Stays the tree, but go its leaves ;
Stays the land, but go its sheaves ;
Stays the time, but go the years ;
Stays the eye, but go its tears ;
Stays the road, but go its wains ;
Stays the till, but go its gains.
Stay and go, go and stay,
Is the round of things alway.
Things that stay must also go.
Later exit ; pace more slow.
Goes the ancient tree at last
Which, hundred times, its leaves had cast.
Goes the land, as what it bears ;
Go the ages, as the years ;
Go the eyes, when wept their tears ;
Goes the road, as went its wains ;
Goes the till, as went its gains.

Do all things go, till naught remains ?

STAY AND GO

Stay and never go away,—
Truth and love and God alway.
Things that come and likewise go
Include not all things below.

HAWORTH.

Quaint little hill town,
 Yorkshire, West Riding,—
 Storm-beat, wind-blown,—
 Wuthering Height,—
 Moor high lifting,
 Purple with heather,
 Glorious in sunshine,
 Grim in the night.

Haworth, lone sitting,—
 Gray stone of low houses,—
 Church, manse, and graveyard
 Grouped close beside,
 Feeling the breath and the blast
 Of the north wind.

Lived here three sisters,
 Whose fame far and wide
 Has gone forth o'er the world
 For books they have written,
 Purple as moorlands,
 Or sad as these hills,—

HAWORTH

Books that the hearts of us all
Have smitten
With Nature's wild wand, or
Humanity's ills.

Frail girls, secluded, writing
Brave thoughts out,—
Dreams and romances
Of fancy, sublime.

One day I stood
Where you lived, so lonely.
Had you not lived there,
I had not stood there,
Or scribbled this rhyme.

EMILY DICKINSON.

Human *orchid*, rathe and wild,
 Hermit soul and Nature's child,
 Poet, reared not in the schools,
 Got elsewhere thy magic tools.
 Who thy teachers? Whence thy art?
 Actedst thou no borrowed part.
 Listener to wind and shower,
 To herb and bush, to bird and flower;
 From some angle, else untrod,
 Peering forth on sun and sod,
 On shows of earth and ways of God.
 Keen perception, cleaving through,
 Electric quick and ever true
 To the marrow, pith, or core
 Of each thing, whose surface o'er
 Most eyes pass, but fail to see
 Their inmost crypts, where meanings be.
 Imagination thine, every word a wing;
 Every period plumage dight in tropic color-
 ing;
 Brief, swift wafts of song,
 From page to page along;

EMILY DICKINSON

Bird-like, bob-o'-lincoln,
Tilting on reed and tree,
With raptured trills of love and light,—
Thanks for thy minstrelsy !

GEORGE WILLIAM CURTIS.

Knight of letters,
Courtly, genial,
Soul unsullied by
Aught menial;
Bold to champion
Noble causes ;
Heedless of the
World's applauses ;
Silver tongue and
Polished phrase,
Who deserves a
Nobler praise ?

As howadji most
Thou shinest.
Egypt, Nubia,
Thou divinest.
Syrian sunshine,
Desert sands —
Tour we with thee
Through far lands,

GEORGE WILLIAM CURTIS

As we journey,
Feeling more
Orient-souled
Than e'er before.

Never on the Nile
Sailed we,
Yet have sailed
On it with thee.

On MacWhirter's
Back have rid,
And climbed to
Loftiest pyramid.

O, howadji,—
Gone before us;
Other Eastern tales
But bore us.
Save Eothen,
None like thee
Has told the
Eastern mystery.

ELIA.

Gentle Elia, mirthful-wise ;
Quaint with quips and oddities ;
Quince-like flavor, all thine own ;
Caprice and sense together sown.
Mind whose whimsies curl like smoke,
Whose earnest shows through many a joke ;
Lover less of hill and vale
Than of roast pig and foaming ale,
And "sweet security of streets,"
And candle light on folio'd treats
Of Cibber, Waller, Jonson rare,
Or Shakespeare's muse and fairie lore.
Gentle Elia, mirthful-wise ;
Quaint with quips and oddities.

THACKERAY.

Caustic moralist ; hard on shams ;
 Separating goats from lambs,
 Seething these, but folding those ;
 From snobbery stripping its false clothes.
 Preacher, novelist, humorist, sage,
 Wit and pathos on each page.

Oh, thy Beckys, Josses, Dobbins,
 Clives and Crawleys, and Cock Robins,—
 Hundred puppets made to walk
 Over the boards, to smirk and talk ;
 Laughed at, lectured, and caressed,
 Or ridiculed, as seemeth best
 To him who sits behind the screen ;
 And stepping forward, now and then,
 Explains the kind of folks these be,
 And very like some, whom we see ;
 Then laughing at *us*, in his sleeve,
 Shows mirrors of ourselves in these.
 “O Thackeray, don’t !” plead Currer Bell.
 A mot opinion echoeth well.

EMERSON.

Concord's sage, self-poised and free ;
Poet optimist, serene ;
Genius, born to mystery,
Mixed with sense more clear and clean
Than ever mystic had before, since Eden's
hour.

Head in cloud, but snowing flakes
Out of realms of dimmest air,
Till all things their semblance takes,
White's his soul, whose seal they bear ;
Lover thou of woodland ways,
Murmurings of the wind and leaves,
Telling what the pine-tree says
To its sisterhood of trees ;
Showing cloth that Hafiz spun,—
Plato, Swedenborg, Montaine.
But thy trademark — *Emerson* —
No one else will e'er obtain.

MY SIRE.

Serene of soul, he minded not what others
thought,—

 Their creed, their way,—
But walked in independent wise, as one
Who his own conscience

 Must obey.

“Some will have more, some less,
 Than we,” he said.

“So mind it not;
Live as thou canst; nor envy mortal, high or
 low, his lot.”

Simple in tastes; walking in inner paths,
From dangerous margins well aloof,
He was content, secure, tranquil, and terror-
 proof.

When night of mind closed in, in later time,
No murmur 'scaped him,—patient to the last,
Serenely still he lived; and now is where all
 ills are past.

MINE.

Two women *mine*. One by my birth to her,—
 Precious,— my *mother*.
 One by election,— *wife* of my choice.
 Two women mine, nor need of another ;
 Two, such as these two, better than nine.

One with eyes of blue — blue as heaven's
 azure —
 Bent o'er my cradle in days now long past ;
 Watched o'er my babyhood, childhood, and
 manhood,
 With simple devotion of love to the last.

Innocent she of the world's lure and fashion ;
 Stern toward all folly and sin of mankind ;
 Careless of straying outside of her duties ;
 These filled the chalice of her guileless mind.
 True to her own, her God, and her nearest,
 Home to two of us truly was she.
 Without her what comfort, the wide world
 over !
 What comfort without her to father and me !

MINE

Mine. When years sped, came a maiden to
love me,

To sit by my hearth-stone, and be my heart's
bride.

Thine are ideals, highest and purest,
Severest and noblest, my true and my tried.
Strenuous to right a whole world's perversity,
Yet nimble with wit sparkling swift from thy
tongue.

Oh, my heart's darling, sorely should I miss
thee!

Thy care ever constant, thy love ever strong.

A. P. G.

Came to my home a small boy,— my Arthur,—
Stayed with us months only,— three times
three :

Learned a few pretty ways or brought them
with him,

Quite entertaining to his mamma and me ;
Reached out his hand for kiss,— royally sure
of one ;

Got it, too, royally, punctual as day.
Went to ride mornings, like prince in his glory,
Papa his donkey, drawing his shay.

Both of us liked it. Well I remember
Pulling up Powder Horn, steep to its height ;
Gazed off on ocean spread out below us.

What did *you* think of it, baby bright ?
Think of it ? Never shall that be recorded.
Silent thy sage lips as sphinx on the sand.

An evening one August he rode away from
me,—
Months three times three,— to Immanuel's
land.

WISH TO BE YOUNG.

Wish to be young, when hair is gray,

Doesn't pay.

Remembered things of long ago,

Now glim'ring bright in sunrise glow

With gladness, that we used to know,

Would not be so,

If set our feet were there again,

Now we are men.

Sameness so sought is not the same.

Some fatal difference, hard to name,

Has changed all without our blame.

Something we miss that used to be.

Something intrudes on memory.

Chiefly ourselves are altered, too,

Bringing to old scenes something new.

So same is not the same to view.

Oh, backward wish not to be set;

No rest is there. We ne'er can get

What *was* without entanglement.

Forward let wishes rove away.

Wish to be young, when hair is gray,

Doesn't pay.

A JUNE SHOWER.

Big, big drops that fall,
Thunder behind them,
Shaking them noisily
Out of their cloud.
Earth drinks them greedily,
Fast as they come to her ;
Thunder behind them
Grumbling aloud.

Thirsty the grasses were,
Parchèd and weary ;
Now they look up
With freshlier mien.
“ Now, life's worth living,”
Seem they to whisper.
Thanks to the thunder,
Thanks to the rain.

THEOLOGY'S RIDDLE.

Who would relieve cannot:

Who could relieve does not,

Is all we can say.

Theology's riddle !

Who'll read it

Or heed it,

Pray ?

Oh, the pains we'd assuage

If we could ;

Which God could allay

If He would !

If in time

Unsolved it be,

Ponder it again

In eternity.

NOSTALGIA.

A lady voyagèd over the sea,
 Enamored of far lands that be
 Lands of romance and mystery.
 Would see the sphinx and sail the Nile,
 And bask in Syrian suns awhile ;
 Then realize her girlhood dream
 Of Tempe's vale and Avon's stream.

She sailed, this lady, 'cross the deep ;
 But, as she sailed, began to weep
 Salt tears, that vied with ocean's brine :
 For *home* so sorely she 'gan pine,—
 Faces that distance made more dear ;
 Voices far sailed from over mere.

Homesick, when 'rived the ocean o'er,
 Her foot she would not set on shore ;
 And, when return the ship did make,
 Went with her back, lest heart should break.

Not all do so ; but so did she,
 Whose world was *home* and her own countrie.

MY HEART AND I.

My heart and I are lonely ;
We sleep, and wake, and rhyme ;
We've passed the years of youth and cheer
And manhood's golden prime.

My heart and I : we've come
To where deep shadows lie ;
And we like shadows seem
Ourselves,— my heart and I.

O shadowy, shadowy world !
My heart and I, let's grapple on !
Do not the depths of shadow
Prove there is a sun ?

GOLDEN MOTIVE.

Motive loving, pure, and true,
Error's mists will struggle through,
Words and acts that gave us pain,
Hard to reconcile, or explain,
Fall away like burrs from trees ;
Melt as ice in tepid seas ;
Disappear as nettles do,
If motive still was ever true.

That remains, when all is shed,—
Clear revealed, ruby red,
Precious, single, and immortal,
Whole life through to heavenly portal.
Motive loving, pure, and true,
Error's mists will struggle through.

I COULDN'T ABIDE, OH!

Plenty of kinds of work there be,
Plainly enough not meant for me,—
No affinity for them whatever.
Yet good are the people who in them are
 clever,
Who wonder at work they see me preferring
As my dog, maybe, does at Tabby's pur-purr-
 ing,
Or as Tabby, in turn, at bow-wow-ing of Fido.
Half peoples' work I couldn't abide, Oh!

DESPAIR.

There is a comfort in despair ;
It's ultimate, past hoping.
No prickly possibility says, " Up,
Climb ; chance glimmers ; don't sit moping."
The lazy bone has rest despair on,
Without compunction, as on a bed.
Afraid not now of further trouble,
Rests there the weary head.
For hoping against hope,
Worse than despair is double.

WHICH TO CHOOSE.

When a good time is over, what then ?

One drops and droops sedately.

When an ill time is over, what then ?

He smiles, as he had not lately.

If good ends in ill, and ill in good,

Which will you choose, my brother ?

It rather evens it, after all,

As six of one and six of the other.

NO SINGLENES.

One sorrow seemèd all. It has no brother,
 I thought, till it had passed away,
 When, lo, behind it crouched *another*
 Hid by it from me yesterday.
 There, there it frowned, another, grim and
 lone.

It also passed, when I had made my moan.
 Then, O my soul, a *third* woe hove in view,
 That had been hid by trouble number two.

I think I grew suspicious now of single ill,
 And dreaded more a hill behind a hill.

I had a *joy*, that seemed alone and vast ;
 It did not stay, but passed.
 Now joy I've none, I wailed ;
 But, groping where its glory stood,
 I found a *second* joy as good,
 Which recognizèd soon prevailed.
 And when this also faded quite,
 It showèd *other* star in deeper night.

NO SINGLENESS

I think I less suspicious grew
Finding a passing joy let other joy shine
through.

No single bliss or single woe
Appointed is to mortals here below.

EAST WIND.

Wind in the East, this morning,
 Right from the stormy Atlantic ;
 Chill to the bone is its breath,
 Freezing each impulse romantic.

For somehow, through crack and through crevice
 Of all that in us is mortal,
 It searches the *soul*, which, shrinking,
 Cowers 'hind its growlery portal.

And every house is a Bleak House,
 With Jaundice and Jaundice within.
 The wind's in the East,
 And, if *we* are, God pardon our sin.

IN OR OUT.

Are you playing, friend, or not ?

You are *in* ? So I tho't.

I am not ; I'm out.

My dear,

Do you hear ?

I'm not *in*, but *out*.

Am I playing, friend, or not ?

I am *in* ? So you tho't.

You are not ; you're out.

My dear,

Do you hear ?

You're not in, but out.

Here a difference is, no doubt.

In life's work as in its play

There's this bother :

Some are *in*, but some are *out*.

The points of view are other.

CHANGE.

Why run life in a single groove ?
 Same things, same,— same over and over ?
 So variations of them prove
 Rarer than four-leaved clover.

Why at fifty be still in the rut
 Worn by one old-fashioned wagon ;
 Or grind your grist in same mill put,
 And market the same with the same old tag
 on ?

Why not a year or so break loose,
 Or peaceably untie your tether ?
 Ceasing to hunt the same old goose,
 Try shot at bird of *other* feather.

Life is long enough to test
 Several kinds of work and scenery
 'Fore we take our final rest
 Under nature's various greenery.

LEST WE REMEMBER.

"Lest we forget," is warning timely,
In rhyme heroic sounds sublimely ;
For prone the best are to heed not
Lessons by sage experience taught.

Lest we remember, too, might be
Theme of noble poesy,—
Remember wrongs of long ago,
Remember woefully each woe,
Remember words that wounded sore,
To answer them with words galore.
And so on Pelion, Ossa pile.
Were to *forget* not well worth while?

Lest we remember ! Sometimes we
Will take to heart *this* homily.

EXPERIMENT.

A day to live,— province enough for me.
 To spy its chances with alert glances,
 Wondering each morning what will be.
 Experiment all. A new country,—
 Time untrod — much to explore ;
 Something never met before.
 What will open to my sight,
 From morn to night ?
 O my day ! If I could find
 (But I'm blind)
 What thou showest and what thou hidest,
 Rich I'd be, outstripping Midas !
 O Experience, make me wiser,
 Keen to spy each day the prize, or
 Door that opens somehow to it ;
 To see what *may* be done and *do* it,
 And never rue it.
 To-day my province I'll explore it ;
 Not ignore and not deplore it.

IN SEASON.

Smell no flower before it blooms ;
 Wait its season.
Smell no flower after it fades,
 For the same reason.
When it opens, quick be there,
 Ere it closes ;
Never blossom mission had for
 Belated noses.
All things so their seasons keep ;
 Punctual come and go.
'Tween whiles what they offer take ;
 Don't be late or slow.
Most of the year nothing is
 On tree or bush :
Watch, and when there something is,—
 Make a rush.

Take this piece of wisdom gratis —
Naught, for who too soon or late is.

**THAT "WHO KEEPS A DOG NEED
NOT BARK HIMSELF."**

The bark of a dog, like the bark of a tree,
Is part of the creature constitutionally.
Don't tread on his province, or bark on it
rather.

As well shave your barber with his own lather ;
Or cry for your baby, that cries 'nough for
seven ;

Or retail divinity to saints up in heaven.
If your dog does the barking, talk like a Chris-
tian.

Dog-duty you've none ; make him do all.
Perfect relief from all canine function ;
Else, why keep a dog, prithee, at all ?

WAITING.

Waiting harder than working,
When no more is to do,
To sit down with hands
That are folded,
To see what 'twill all
Amount to ;
Whether seed sown will quicken,
Grow, and abound,
Or whether labor is wasted
Under the ground.

Waiting for things that are striven for
Patiently still,
Tests the heart of the worker more than
Climbing the hill ;
More than beating the bush, more than
Threshing the rye,
More than treading the wine press, more than
To do and to die.

Waiting, when life's work is over,
For the reprieve.

WAITING

Days gliding slowly by without
Leave to leave.

Sitting idling the time
Far from the goal,—
Waiting, waiting, waiting
Release of the soul.

Waiting, as working, will *end*,
Too, bye and bye.
That is the goal of waiting,—
Permission to die.

SIMULTANEOUSNESS.

While I sit, pen in hand,
 Sun shines ; winds blow ;
 Rivers run ; birds fly ;
 Cattle browse ; grasses grow ;
 Sky's blue ; leaves rustle ;
 Seas sparkle ; fishes swim ;
 Mountains tower ; far below
 Shadows darkle,
 Dusk and dim.

People breathe,
 And work, and rest,
 And walk, and run,
 And eat, and drink,
 And wear good clothes,
 And rugged, too ;
 And sigh, and wish,
 And even think ;
 And cheat, and fawn,
 And cry and laugh ;
 In spots eat husks
 As prodigals ;

SIMULTANEOUSNESS

In spots, the
Fatted calf.

At once, and ever, all things
Come and go, simultaneous.
Who remembers this is so?

LOVE'S APPEAL.

Come Love, come :
Pilgrim from afar,
In thy shining car,
From some radiant star.

Come, Love, come.
A heart awaits thee here,
A heart that holds thee dear,
A heart that wants thee near.

Come, Love, come.
Hearest thou my cry ?
Ere its echoes die
In yon empty sky,
Come, Love, come.

THE SUMMER SEA.

I sit me down by the summer sea
On a cliff o'erlooking the ebbing tide,
And see a hundred sail, maybe,
Into the glimmering distance glide.
And my thoughts go with them far away
To islands dim, I know not where ;
Where it is summer every day,
And fronded palms in tropic air.

An hour I sit by the summer sea,
Nor heed the time till an hour is sped ;
For the sea and the sail are eternity,
And I as one of the blessed dead.
O, the summer sea ! O, the summer sea !
And a cliff o'erlooking its tidal flow,
And a hundred sail,— that carry me
Wherever my wind-blown fancies go.

MONOTONY.

Once is good, and twice, and thrice,
Then, somehow, we weary.
Monotony's a bore, no doubt,
Both dull and dreary.
One tone, one tune,
One pain, one pleasure.
O break the spell !
Vary the measure.
E'en ill is good
That changes ration,
And good is ill
By dire rotation.

ILLUSION.

I've dreamed a dream more real
Than house or fort or tree.
My soul has builded on it
A solid masonry.
Yet this is called *illusion* :
The other fact, 'tis true ;
Yet nothing of the fact came
So far as I ever knew.
While in my dream ideas were
Bright jewels of a crown,
To shine when house and fort and tree
Have fallen down.

CHARM.

"— The untaught strain,
That sheds beauty on the rose."

Emerson.

Charm of things, of deeds, of words,
Charm of beauty, charm of people,—
Who'll define the magic spell?
Charm of the ear in evening bell
From some far-off churchly steeple.

Witchery of sound, of sense, of sight,
Of face, of form, of love, of light.
Which *is*, and straightway down we kneel;
Which's *not*, and turn we on our heel,
Careless of reason, rhyme, or right.

So charm be gone,— the rose's dower
"Untaught," imperial in the flower:
So charm be gone! Who cares to stay?
All, saint and sinner, turn away.

USE OF THE UNUSED.

Dollars I never spend
 Are not in vain.
 What misery spending were
 Did naught remain.

The mile I need to walk
 I walk secure,
 Because if need were more
 Strength would endure.

The earth unpeopled is
 O'er regions wide,
 Without which where men dwell
 They'd not abide.

Dear friends of mine there be
 I seldom greet ;
 But what they are to me
 Is ever sweet.

The whole of love is taxed
 In service never ;

USE OF THE UNUSED

**Its vaster self is still
A joy forever.**

**Thanks for the unused part
Of all below,
Supporting still the used.
'Tis no vain show.**

JUNE 17.

Defeat that we celebrate,
Braver than victory ;
Rue for a crown,
Than laurel more rare.
Proving the stuff that
Heroes are made of,—
Earnest of triumph,
Not of despair.

Hope for a people
Crushed not by slaughter,
Seeing that spilled blood
Is mightiest appeal.
Louder than trumpet blare
Stirring the souls of men :
Freedom's glad harbinger,
Liberty's seal.

BURRS.

Useful burrs to what's inside,
As to rhinoceros his hide.
Nothing fine or good to eat,
That needs not shelter from the street,—
Picket fence, or barbèd wire,
'Tween small boy and his desire.

Talent, too, and genius rare,
Public claim would seldom spare,
Did no burr their gift surround,
Or goblin guard protect its ground.

Common, rough, and undesired
Must seem the prophet most inspired,
Till his message ready be ;
Then bursts the burr and sets him free.

OVER THE BORDER.

Thoughts flit over the border
To a world where dreams abide.
They hover where no recorder
Reports their wanderings wide.

Poetry, these, for poets
Whose spirits to them fly,—
Over the border to them,
Beyond earth's boundary.

Never in rhyme they're captured,
So very rathe they be,
Seen only by souls enraptured
In tranced ecstasy.

RESTLESSNESS.

Inherited,— a heart, that loved to rove ;
That slid from this to that, and thence again,
Nor rested anywhere, because itself was daft
To stir,— to change its place if keep its pain.
Rest is not rest to restlessness, I ween,
But motion rather, answering its desire :
Motion its courier, over hill and plain ;
A moving pillow, moving lest it tire
The head, that thinks away to distant place,
And wearies most at slowest pace.

ON THE TRACK.

The car runs smoothly on the track
 For many and many a year.
 A moment off; a wreck it lies, beyond re-
 pair;
 And lives go hurtling to the void
 That rode secure before:
 And souls are in Eternity,—
 Their earth rides all are o'er.
 Because a moment *off the track*
 The buzzing carriage shied,—
 Effect of something left amiss;
 And so they died.

Oh, *souls* of men! The heavenly laws in
 parallels do lie!
 Upon them speed we to our goal.
 We leave them but to die.
 Upon the track we glide to heaven,
 And get there passing *well*:
 While *off* the track we glide,
 And get to — somewhere else —
 To ——.

NOTHING.

Nothing to-day, please :

Nothing to-day.

Nothing we think,

Nothing we say.

Blessed be nothing.

Nothing is bad

Only when something

Is to be had.

Rhyme we of nothing

With idle pen.

To nothing will nobody

Say Amen ?

WHAT ARE YOU GOOD FOR?

People still are people,
 Variously made,
 As rocks of different quarries
 Or grasses blade from blade.
 Sending these to school
 With lessons same,
 Doesn't alter structure,
 Brawn, or brain.
 Only labels them alike, with
 One misfitting name.

People still are people,
 Good for what they *be*;
 Good for nothing other,
 On the land or sea.

Heavy one as lead,
 Light as cork his brother;
 Light as cork his head.

To put to tasks the same
 Is egregious folly!
 Civilization's special
 Melancholy.

WHAT ARE YOU GOOD FOR?

Go to one for what he is,—
 He's your man.
 Go to him for what he isn't,
 All flashes in the pan.

One is good to laugh with,
 One to help you groan,
 One to hug his coppers,
 One his gold to loan.

One doth taste of acids,—
 Make you shut your eye;
 One so sickly sweet is,
 As to make you cry.

One is like a gooseberry,
 One is like a goose,
 One is like a weasel,
 One is like a moose.

If what mortal *is* doesn't please,
 Go the earth around,
 But leave him at his ease.
 Nature gives all place,
 People's well as things :
 If thou likest bird-song,
 Find the bird that sings.

KNOWING.

We know that some time, soon or late,
Certain event will fall ;
But, somehow, knowing of it *so*,
Prepareth for it not at all.

We live and live from year to year,
Then *sudden* it swoops down.
It holds us in its fatal grip,
It has us now upon the hip,
Boots not to fret or frown.

Submission ! what has come at length,
We long had known would come ;
But never knew about it much,
Until it had us in its clutch,
And sudden struck us dumb.

HILLS.

Against the light of east or western skies,
 After the set of sun or e'er he rise,
 How bold do contours of the hills appear,
 Defined so clear,
 Some far, some near.

Silent, broad-based, their bending forms
 crouch low ;
 In spring robed green, in winter dight with
 snow.

What limnèd beauty do their shapes disclose,
 Moulded by time in nature's perfect mould.
 O artist, look ! their bosomed grace so rare,
 'Gainst gold of morn or eve,—
 Hill contours — far and fair.

WIND.

Moving air,— on through space,—
Driving, whither ? in a race ;
Felt his breath upon my face.

Goes he by in gusts and breezes,
Fast or loitering, as he pleases ;
Warms he now ; and now he freezes.

Perfumed breath from fields of flowers,
Saturate breath of storms and showers ;
Salt-sea breath enabling ours.

Wind, too windy please not be ;
Gently blow o'er wold and lea.
Leave leaf on tree, and hat on me.

But, if you will blow, blow you will !
Broom of the air, *sweep* vale and hill ;
When all is clear and clean, be still.

THE RIGHT SIDE OF SORROW.

Something past and over.
The right side of sorrow
Is yesterday,— not to-morrow.
Oh, the ills departed
Leave us so light-hearted !
Sleep they 'neath their gravestones.
Sow we o'er them roses
Where each ill reposes.

Jesus died,— that's over.
Calvary left behind him !
No more pain to bind him :
Clear the way before him.

Something past and over.
The right side of sorrow
Is yesterday,— not to-morrow.

VOYAGE OR PORT.

Which is better, voyage or port?
 Sailing, sailing over the sea,
 Bound for haven over the deep,
 Or snugly to lie in land-locked lee
 Of hills whose shelterings eternal be.
 Which is better,— voyage or port?

Voyage. O the pleasure of prospect, of hope !
 Tumultuously riding the dark billows o'er ;
 Romance in the heart — glad vision of lands,
 Where orange and palm trees skirt a far
 shore
 Whose boughs in birds nestle of plumage so
 fine,
 Where days are all beauty and nights all
 divine,
 Where graces and muses hold their high court.
 Is *voyage* to such blisses not better than port ?

Or is the *port* better ? Sail furled, anchor cast,
 A home not to roam from, but rest in for aye,

VOYAGE OR PORT

Sweet comfort that settles down somewhere at
last,

Wild roving from pillar to pole overpast.

Methinks voyage is better than port, till night
falls;

Port better than voyage when the curfew calls.

THAT NO TASK IS ONE.

When *nothing* the task is,
That's task much as any.
At school with hands folded
Sit Tommy and Benny.

Work hard at books
Keeps them *less* busy,
Them and their sisters,—
Susie and Lizzie.

When tasks of something
And nothing are over,
Then boys and girls smell
Daisies and clover.

WE PLAN AND PLAN.

We plan and plan in complex-wise
A labyrinth of folly ;
Plan on plan, as alp on alp,
To reach which futile wholly,
For, ere the time planned for possession,
Things take a turn in retrocession :
Face us about and set us going
Cloudward, skyward, past our knowing,
Dropping us in lands sequestered,
Far to northward, eastward, westward,
Where our plans so complex-wise
Nowhere greet our banished eyes.

POPPIES.

Tinsel bloom of poppy fair
Feeds the eyes with color bright.
Queens of Ethiop well might wear
Such airy crowns of light.
Oh, the poppied fields of flame
Over Europe's broad expanse !
Scarlet wild putting to shame
Dame Fashion's flaunts of gayest France.
Cleopatra of the plain,
Fatal fair thy gay decoys :
Millions thy Mark Antonys,
Captives of thy poppied joys.
Yet to eye no petals shine
More innocently bright than thine.

"Deep, as deep in water sinks a stone."

Swinburne.

That is how deep hope drops
When it falls off the edge of the soul,
Down into dim abysses,
Sinking and sinking ;
And where it stops sinking
Nobody sees, for this is
Hid 'neath the deep billows' roll,—
Deeper than seeing or thinking.
That is how deep hope drops,
When it falls off the edge of the soul.

YOUR TWO EYES.

We see the same world, you and I,
Thro' different pairs of eyes;
So what we see is not the same,
To your and my surprise.

For when our seeings we compare
And talk them freely over,
Our talk is neither here nor there,
As you saw pimpernel, I clover.

TWO TOWNS.

Two towns contiguous lie upon the map,
As letters A and B in alphabet,
In county Plymouth of the old Bay State ;
Whence the paternal and maternal ancestors,
Whose blood and instincts made my own,
Bringing I know not what from these environ-
ments ;
So that, where'er I go or stay, no doubt
These towns contiguous in me stay or go,
And in some mystic sort live, breathe,
Muse, think, and work ; and, when I die,
Will pass diffused into the spirit realms,
Reporting so at length from A and B,
In county Plymouth of the Old Bay State, to
God.

BEGINNING — FINISHING.

All began : so did we.
 Some were glad at our infancy.
 We began breathing, waking, sleeping,
 Eating, drinking, crying, creeping,
 Walking, running, learning from books,
 Playing with marbles, fishing with hooks.
 All began : so did we.
 Some were glad at our infancy.

We who began, must *finish*, too.
 That's what remains for us to do,—
 Finish breathing, waking, sleeping,
 Eating, drinking, crying, creeping,
 Walking, working, learning from books,
 Playing with marbles, fishing with hooks.
 We who began must finish, too :
 That's what remains for us to do.

LIFE A RIDDLE.

What is life for ? Sometimes I wonder,
 See not the good of't. What doesn't avail ?
 If it were not, as not it soon will be,
 What were the difference ? Do seas miss
 a sail ?

White on the waves of it, lo ! how it glistens ;
 Anon, where it was we behold it no more :
 Ocean's as great without it as with it ;
 More lonesome, may be, but grand as be-
 fore.

Life that we live here, *riddle* thou art to me ;
 Sphinx of the sands, with lips sealed for aye.
 What is life for ? Sometimes I wonder.
 Perhaps God could tell me his own silent
 way.

Life is for something ; try to believe it,
 Brief as mysterious though it may be.
 Life is for something. When we are past it
 What is that something wise ones may see.

FIT THAT BEFITS.

What *fits* is so far good, we may be sure,
E'en tho' its quality be poor ;
Tho' it be worn and out at elbow,
It almost even looketh well so.
True to all contours of the body
One fairly looks in cloth of shoddy ;
While, if in broadcloth texture A 1,
You pay big prices to array one,
Yet manage so to *fit him illy*,
A clown he looks on Piccadilly.
Yet, fit is not of structure merely,
To fit complexion something nearly :
To fit the eyes, the hair, the skin,
To fit besides the soul within,
Passes oft the tailor's art ;
Who fails to fit some unseen part
For lack of which no vest allures,
Or fashion comeliness secures.

ISN'T IT SAD, OH?

Once I was nothing but a thought in mind of
one — or two ;

For born I wasn't then, my friend, was you ?
Thought must have been indefinite of who
I'd be,—

A problematic boy — or *girl*, might be.
But on March 10 'twas settled clear,
On March of — no matter of what year.
And since I verses write, and cast a shadow,—
I, who before was nought :

Nought but a hopeful — *thought*
Of one or two.

Isn't it sad, Oh ?

A BLACK KITTEN.

Frisky little blackness,
Tail up on high,
Art thou aware
Cats, too, must die?
When you're a cat, sedate
As a deacon,
Then you'll realize this
That I speak on.
But not yet awhile,—
No, no, no!
After your tail again;
Don't be slow.
If I was a black little
Kit like you,
Spite of mortality,
That's what I'd do,—
And catch it, too.

ACCESS.

Some things distant be, so far,—
Far aloof as farthest star.
Some things near as our next neighbor,
Distant still be as Mt. Tabor.
Inaccessible, near or far,
Certain things and people are.

Some things open be to all :
Latch-string out for great and small ;
Inside, outside, all as one ;
Access free to air and sun.
So some things and people be
Extra near and neighborly.

Both kinds go the world to form,
To keep us cool and keep us warm.

A TURTLE.

Spots on his back as moons on a disk,
Doesn't know he has 'em, runs no risk
Of knowing about 'em to his dying day,
Long as turtles live, and their tails alway.
No chance of vanity for his old pate.
We'll admire for him, and never prate.
If we should tell him how yellow they be,
He might put on airs like Count Castellane.

"The soft blue sky did never melt
 Into his heart. He never felt
 The witchery of the soft blue sky."
Wordsworth.

Poor Peter Bell ! Above thee, too,
 The heavenly deeps did rise,—
 Divinely deep, divinely blue,
 Divinely "soft blue" skies.
 Of what avail? No influence thence
 Into thy spirit stole.
 The sky, so softly, deeply blue,
 Ne'er melted in thy soul.
 So didst thou live, and so didst die ;
 And what thou missed didst never know.
 Above thy dust skies still are blue,
 And ever will be so.

A THOUGHT WORLD.

There is a world within,
 Where thoughts, not things, abide,—
 World we carry with us,
 Whether we walk or ride
 Or sit or stand or sleep,—
 World with hands not made
 As in a heaven of dreams
 Where thoughts are all the trade.

Thoughts, silent, come and go
 Like sun and shade.
 Thoughts of gloom that sadden.
 Thoughts of light that gladden,
 Thoughts of love that madden,
 Thoughts of all complexions,
 Features, and connections,
 Grave and gay *within*,
 Neither weave nor spin,
 But live their life away.

Outward world of things
 Soon we shall dismiss.
 Will the world of thoughts
 Then be all there is ?

MY PRAYER.

Give me, O Lord, from day to day,
Grace to live calmly, come what may,
To keep with even step the smooth or rugged
way.

Teach me, O Teacher, how to trim my sail
When storm is on the deep. When to a gale
Winds roughen, billows beat, let fears then not
prevail.

O let me see when roads familiar close,
And what way next no wisdom of mine knows,
A glimmering light, that one step 'fore me
glows.

Leave me not, Lord, in this dark world of
sin

Without some witness of thy love within,
Without some strength divine on which to
lean.

When comes the closure in of all things dear,
Let me still in the darkness thy voice hear,
Till shadows flit and heavenly shores appear.

VACANT HOUSES.

Gone are the people,
Summering somewhere
By mountain and sea.
Nobody knows wherever they be.

Here are their houses, though,
Standing disconsolate,
Empty, where of late
All was tenanted,
Busy, and free.

What is the difference?
No one but feels it.
One glance reveals it
To thee and to me.
Loneliness lurks in
The houses deserted,
Haunts vacant rooms whence
People have fled.

Nobody, nobody,
Nobody stirring,

VACANT HOUSES

Stand here the houses
As graves of the dead.

Oh, what do souls *do*
Inside our dwellings?
As behind faces, under our vests
And under our laces,—
A boon to the public,—
Joy, brightness, and cheer,—
These are all here,
Till gone are the people,
Then houses are drear.

LIMBO.

When the heart with tendrils groping
Blindly forth in vacant spaces,
Seemeth as one vainly hoping
Something tangible and stable,—
What or where or when, unable
To imagine,— *then in Limbo* lost we be,
Till *something wanted*, through the gloaming
Seen is, near or distantly.
Ceases then the soul's vague roaming;
Go we for it instantly.

WEALTH.

When I was young
My wealth was *people*,
Who furnished bed and board
Good as I now afford.
Now I provide myself
From my own shelf.
But they who were my wealth before
Are gone from sea and shore.
You may depend on't
This is the end on't.

BALANCE.

Scales that tip
 When nothing's weighed
 Rightly nothing weigh.
 Poise of mind essential is.
 Else what we say,
 Seeming light or heavy,
 Has no warrant.
 That judgment balance needs
 Is apparant.

Balance in Nature's
 Half the game :
 In music and in
 Art the same,
 This offset by that,—
 Time by rhyme.
 Without poise and
 Counterpoise
 All goes lame.

INEVITABLE.

When it comes to *that*,
Take it as from God.
Challenge what you can.
What can't be withstood,

Give accommodation ;
Build in it your nest,
As bird in rocky cleft,—
Safest so and best.

I WONDER.

Life goes where when it goes out,
I wonder ?
Where goes flame when away it flares ?
Where goes light when it disappears ?
Where goes sound from human ears,
Loud as thunder ?
When 'tis gone, where's it gone,
I wonder ?

LIMIT AND LIBERTY.

Can is a word dynamic,
 It goes as far as it can.
 There it meets its limit,
 Powerless beyond a span.
 Each carries in himself
 An unseen tether,
 Which lets him freely to its length
 In any kind of weather ;
 But then reminds him, with a jerk,
 His can is over.
 Whose tether is to Coventry
 Can't stretch it out to Dover.
 Fins give to fishes, peerless boon,
 Dominion of the sea ;
 But hold them there in aqueous prison ;
 In air, on shore no liberty.
 Each can within his Nature's scope,
 With free permission ;
 Outside he *cannot*,— peasant or pope :
 His cue's submission.

NANTASKET.

Surf-crested sands looking out o'er the sea ;
 Shell-tinted volutes ; curves a mile long,
Forming and failing perpetually ;
 Wave-voice of ocean ; wind-waft of song.
Far through the sleepy air ships float half
 seen,
Dream-like, the sky and the water between.
 Up to the sun a million waves sparkle ;
 Under, the shadows twinkle and darkle.
Horizon and shore the grand prospect's frame
 is.
Nantasket, Nantasket, Nantasket its name is.

SURF.

Handsome from shore it looketh,—
Spray blown white on the shoal,—
Telleth of opposition
'Neath where the billows roll ;
Resenteth the sea resistance
In jargon of frantic surf ;
Foam of the white waves, chanting
Challenge to aught upon earth,
That dareth dispute his dominion,—
Kingly, divine right by birth.

So in our souls it fareth.
On reef of Norman's woe,
Surf of the soul pronounceth
Its *unavailing* veto.

THE DOOR.

Uncles and aunts, nearly a score,
Once were mine, but now are no more.
Well provisioned for life, I thought.
Life continues, but they do not.
Stepped they out — nearly a score —
Through one and the selfsame door.
The door is left ; now they be gone,
For thee and me some future morn.
When we've gone, too, the door will stand,
Till last inhabitant leaves the land.

GOING NOWHERE.

A very good walk that way,
When business is down.
It leads direct to — No Matter —
A Nowhere town.
You go and go at your feet's pleasure ;
Not straight or fast, but at your leisure.
And should you chance arrive after sundown,
In any Nowhere town, 'twill be No Matter.

HAIR.

What a thing hair is,
World without end.
What picturesqueness
It doth lend ;
'Specially hair of the
Human head :
Color any from
Gray to red.
How it catches the
Winds of heaven
And bloweth corresponding
Ways, six or seven.
If hair were let alone
To grow
'Twould make a wilderness
Below.
Queerest appurtenance
That's human,
Whether on child or man
Or woman.

EVENTS.

Events are events to childhood.
It fathoms not your pain ;
Its own is quite absorbing ;
It boots not to explain.

How a sorrow fits *another*
Takes years to recognize.
When a child is old as his elders,
He first sees as with their eyes.

LOVED THEE MORE.

I wish I *loved thee more*, dear ;
'Twere such a boon to me.
'Twould make your every look, dear,
Redemptive. If I loved thee
 With relish doubly keen,
 What wealth of visits !
 What golden minutes !
 'Twould cure my spleen.

NATURAL SOUNDS.

Sound of myriad *leaves*
 Rustling in a breeze
 Through a world of trees :
 Sweeter music to my ear
 Than cathedrals ever hear.

Sense of multitude comes o'er me ;
 Cups of cool delight they pour me ;
 No discordant note to bore me :
 Mystic sense of viewless bands,
 Minstrel harps in fairy hands.

And the *insect* choir that fills
 Evening's ear with tiny trills,—
 Sound-full silence of the hills :
 Sweeter music to my ear
 Than cathedrals ever hear.

Sound of *waters* lapsing down
 Through some brooklet of the town,
 Or some river of renown
 To listening flags upon the banks
 Babbling thanks.

NATURAL SOUNDS

Rattling *rain* upon the ground ;
On the roof big drops that sound,
While the chimneys 'neath resound,
As pianos grew outside,
And Paderewskis there did bide.

Sound of *winds* around the eaves,
Plaints of banshee ill at ease,
Through shut blinds and crevices,—
Minor soul sounds wandered far
From ocean cave and evening star.

Rumblings of *thunder* in the cloud,
Titan's ninepins in a crowd;
Hit by fire-balls tumbling loud
In the bowling places high,—
Alleys vast and halls of sky.

Music of the spheres to me,
Orchestra and symphony,
Nature's infinite melody:
Sweeter music to my ear
Than cathedrals ever hear.

PERSPECTIVE.

On the hill yonder a woodman bends,
 Felling a tree, with steel that glistens.
 Felling the tree is *all* he does ?
 Hark ! he knows not somebody listens.
 Somebody does, tho' : heeds the axe,
 Hears its echoes, sees its gleam ;
 Sees the woodman 'mid the trees ;
 Sees the hill, the vale, the stream.

Felling the tree is all he does ?
 Thinks so *he* : not so do I.
 Makes he music on the breeze ;
 Something human there so high.
 Makes with vale and hill and trees
Picture no Claude could glorify.

O, Perspective ! Woodman, know
 You are part of all you see ;
 Doing more with axe you wield
 Than felling yonder tree.

INACCESSIBLE.

Could not reach it hitherto.

In the distance far could spy it,
 Too far and high for foot of mine
 To venture nigh it.
 The *life* I would *most like* to live,
 The gods *deny* it.

To something else I speed,
 Nearer, *less* enchanting
 (May serve to while the time
 In lieu of better granting);
 The *other*, though forbidden,
 Fancy still kept haunting.

Worked long years
 At task I would not,
 Longing still for
 That I could not;
 Thinking this may
 Bring me nearer
 To the life I
 Counted dearer.

INACCESSIBLE

From some stile
Admit me to it
That, if late, I
Still might do it.

When the day came for transition
(For it came by heaven's permission),
Was I glad, too?
Aye, and sad, too.
Left the old path,—
'Cause I had to!
For the life I once so longed for,
Now tho' beautiful as ever,
Opening to my endeavor,
Wedded to old duties found me.
So, when burst the bands that bound me,
Glad I was, and sorry, too,
To live as most I wanted to.

LEISURE.

Work is good, but leisure is, sometimes, too ;
And then we do the most when least we do.
Is sitting still a sin ? How few the sinners !
More frisk and fret and bolt their dinners.

Sometimes an *object simply* I would be,
Like rocks, or cattle drowsing on the lea,
While winds of heaven blow over me,
And sun and shade and evening holy
Adopt me for their own, and still me wholly ;
And nothing breaks awhile the *passive* spell.
This, busy mortal, sometimes pleaseth well.

SOME AND OTHERS.

Some like to sit on platforms,
And somebodies to be,—
See and be seen, and
Advertise, "*This's we.*"

Others prefer to sit
In seats more low,
Where they may simply
See the show and go.

ALMOST THERE.

Oh, on journeys of my childhood how my
heart beat

When the magic word was spoken,

"Almost there!"

Then erect I sat and listened, all astir from
foot to hair —

"Almost there."

Once towards Glasgow, once towards London,

Once towards Paris, once towards Rome.

"Almost there," the courier shouted,

"Yonder looms St. Peter's dome."

Oh, my spirit, travel-weary, there's a city

Than Italia's more fair.

Oh, the rapture, draw we near it?

Sweet Evangel,—almost there.

UNPALATABLE GOODNESS.

Uncomfortably good is somebody
Whose name I could (but won't) mention.
He's honest and prudent and temperate,
Means the best, with purest intention ;
But the flavor somehow isn't the thing
(Life's far sweeter without it).
The tail of his virtue has a sting
(Once feel it you never can doubt it).
That is all there is about it.

LITTLE FLY.

(A FANTASY IN GOSSAMER.)

Art thou mortal,
Little fly?
Wings of gauze,
Like a soul's.
When you die,
Live you still,
Same as I?
Think you will?

Away you fly.
Little fly,
Good-bye.
Wings of gauze,
Like a soul's.

THREE LITTLE GIRLS.

Out there white at play,
Full half a mile away;
Look like fairies they,—
Three little girls.

They ever pout and scold?
They not of fairy mould?
They ever rude and bold?
Three little girls.

Fair as a picture they,
Seen half a mile away,
Out there white at play,—
Three little girls.

ANODYNES.

Pillows and cushions

Suit us well

When we are weary.

Potions and lotions

Do likewise,

When we're teary.

Softly soothing where was pain,

Soporific to the brain,

Nature stores her wealth in mines,

And her grace in anodynes.

AFRAID.

Afraid—

Of the snake's fang, the bee's sting ;
 Not of Thee, my God and King !
 Nor of aught that thou dost send.

Look sorrow in the face,
 Crave his boon and grace,
 Level glances lend.
 Squeeze his hand of might,
 Nothing thee shall harm.
 Black shall turn to white,
 Vain is all alarm.
 Naught but good can be
 From God on land or sea.

Afraid—

Of the snake's fang, the bee's sting ;
 Not of Thee, my God and King.

BUT FOR A ROOD.

But for a rood
 I had made the journey.
By lack of a rood
 I travelled in vain.
Had I arrived
 All had been victory.
Why the bells toll
 That rood may explain.

CHILDREN OF ONE HOME.

Together.

As fledglings close in nest,
 By one father blest,
 One mother's love caressed,
 And put at night to rest
 In their little beds,—
 Rows of tired heads.
 Together.

Scattered.

'Neath one roof,— no more.
 Left its nursery floor ;
 Passed out of its door.
 Parents gone before.
 Heads laid *not* in row
 (Save two where the daisies grow).
 Scattered.

ALMOST.

What so tragic as talent,
 Successful within an inch :
Powerful enough to grapple,
 Never the matter to clinch.
Always a trifle under
 The fated high-water mark.
Wing-lift just *not* able
 To enter heaven's gate with the lark.
Predestined so forever
 Nothing to bring to pass,
But dismally register failures ;
 Briefly — to go to grass.
While some preposterous fellow,
 With somebody to boost,
Steps *on* it and above it,—
 Succeeds — and rules the roost.

GLIMPSES.

Something less than seeing,
 Something more than not.
Quick-delivered glances
 From the eyeball shot,

At what shuts directly,
 But in time not quite
To preclude completely
 Penetrative sight.

Glimpses only. Glimpses,—
 Cracks and keyholes through,—
Clews and informations
 Parting false from true.

THE SPHINX.

"Still unread is thy riddle."

How seriously we take thee,
 Friend of the desert sand,
 Because you're silent and big
 In a weary, lonely land.

Because you're old as Methusalem ;
 Buried, too, up to the breast,
 From Seattle to Jerusalem
 Thou givest the world no rest.

'Tis the sphinx, the sphinx, forever,
 We're like thee when we're glum,
 And when we're dim of our meanings
 (Which is solemnly true of us — some) ;

And we're like thee when we're stupid,
 As well as when we are mum.
 And when we're a riddle to solve which
 Strikes our elders and betters dumb.

O sphinx, 'tis said you're sand-worn,
 Nose quite wasted away ;
 Perhaps like us you're silent
 Because you've nothing to say.

IMMUNITY.

In yon orchard, lo ! a tree
 With noble weight of pears,
 Yellow and ruddy-cheeked,
 Most temptingly appears.

Yet ripen they untasted.
 The fact is they're insipid ;
 Whoever had to eat
 Not envied were, but pitied.

We shall be let alone
 To grow and ripe and rot,
 If nobody desires
 The taste of what *we've* got.

Here is immunity, indeed ;
 If we were more delicious,
 Stolen, we should be, and devoured ;
 They'd skin and slice and dish us.

NORTH POLE.

Frozen neighbor, loved of Peary ;
 Science's darling, sweetheart, dearie,
 Up in regions frigid, dreary,—
 A recluse.

Suitors many long have sought thee ;
 Would give their buttons to have caught thee,
 Or their silver to have bought thee.
 What's the use ?

Chilly neighbor, spite thy coldness,
 Sundry sailors sail with boldness :
 Get a finger and a toe less,—
 What abuse !

On an ice-floe fain would spy thee,
 Or from masthead would descry thee ;
 Pray one prayer, "Oh, don't deny me."
 Vain the cruise.

GETTING THROUGH.

We shall be getting through ;
Nothing is more true.
Be it good or ill,
When we've climbed the hill
We shall make descent.
Life will soon be spent.
When we're through, then rest,
Sweetest, then, and best.
After rest, who rises
Shall see — *surprises*.

WHERE GOING ?

People all are going,
And I wonder where,—
With dim curious wonder,—
And what want they there ?

O, it's none of my business
Where the people go ;
Still, where *are* they going ?
I'd rather like to know.

CLOUDS HAVE COME OVER.

Morning woke cheerily.
Clouds have come over ;
 The sun has hidden his head,
 The east is luridly red ;
Over the fields of clover
 Rain begins to be shed :
Prospects look drearily.

My heart,— it was glad once.
Clouds have come over,
 Dark on my pathway,
 Dark as this dark day ;
Soon 'twill be over.
 Always clouds break away
O'er hearts that were sad once.

A LOVE OF A MORNING.

A love of a morning this is,
An epicure to please, sir.
It were worse if it were warmer;
If 'twere colder we might sneeze, sir.

But it hits the bull's eye fairly
(Hope we know when we are suited);
Who likes not such as this is
Should be ostracized and looted

For not to prize perfection,
When at its zenith fullness,
Is sinful, and by exile
There'd be one more cynic fool less.

WHERE LIV'ST THOU?

Where liv'st thou, friend,
 When at home?
 Near Bow Bells or
 Eternal Rome?

Where Love broodeth
 Evermore?
 Or by Hate's
 Lethean shore?

Where care carks like
 Rusty hinge?
 Or peace broods with
 Folded wings?

Close to the great
 Heart of God?
 Or in the exile's
 Land of Nod?

When at home, where
 Liv'st thou, friend?
Where? wide
 Destinies depend.

YES OR NO ?

If we want everything,
And get crumbs ;
If our pudding only
Lacks plums,

The wind's in the east
Where we reside,
And all that's good
An ebbing tide.

Is this so, friend,—
Yes or no ?
Hell or heaven such
Answers show.

SLIPPED AWAY.

They slipped away,
 Slipped away,
 One by one,
 Whom I loved,
 And who loved me.
 Look I all
 The world around,
 Nowhere these I see.
 They slipped away,
 Slipped away.

If I should slip
To where they be,
 And their dear arms
 Encircle me,
 The good old time
 Were come again,—
 My heaven! my heaven!
Amen, Amen.

MINUS A THOUGHT.

If I had a *thought*
I'd prize it,
This morning,
When my brain is
Like a purse
Without a penny.
How scarcity
Makes precious
Gold's best
To who hasn't any !
As to the desert rain is
Most welcome and
Most gracious,—
At least, so I surmise it,—
If I had a thought
I'd prize it.

NO USE TALKING.

"It's no use talking,"
Sets us walking.
The mind is made up.
Tongue be laid up.
Chattering more
'S a weary bore.
Wastes the time,
Bad's this rhyme.
Stop its mocking;
It's no use talking.
Priests and laymen,
One word,— *Amen.*

"A crow that flies through heaven's sweetest air."—*Nile
Notes, Curtis.*

Many birds of plumage rare
Brighten spring and summer skies ;
But thro' heaven's sweetest air
A raven flies.

Know'st, my heart, what meaneth this ?
Thro' thy azure sunny bright,
Thro' thy pleasure, thro' thy bliss,
Flits no plume of night ?

In summer's sweetest air,—a *crow*.
Fly thou wilt across the blue.
Summer still is sweet, I trow,
Spite of you.

A RAINY DAY.

The number of drops when it raineth,—
 Who counteth or careth how many?
 Once they touch ground, vanished forever;
 No memorial of them,— not any,
 Save the earth a something wetter,
 And the verdure something greener,
 And a washed face of all nature,
 And renewed port and demeanor
 Of each pebble and each grass-blade,
 And the infernal clouds of dust laid.
 So the rainy day, it raineth,
 While black umbrellas blossom
 And humanity complaineth
 Of the weather, and the weather :
 For it raineth and it raineth.
 Not averse to rain are daisies
 Only wet clothes wilt by wetting.
 For the rain all nature praises,
 From sun rising to sun setting.

COLOR PUZZLE.

If anybody asked me why
Fields are green but sky blue,
There's Topsy's answer, "So they grew."
If asked again why grew they *so*,
I might, friend, ask you "*so*,"
And you maybe would look wise,
(And feel foolish) fumbling whys.
But the fact is patent to all eyes.
Green sky and blue tree
Would suit neither you nor me.
Should some troubler still blurt, "*Why?*"
We'll refer him to any poet
Who assumes to know it;
Or philosopher (green or blue)
Who (simpleton) knows it, too.
Adieu.

COBWEBS.

Cobwebs are beautiful.
Nobody minds them
But housewife with broom ;

(Spiders are artists, tho',
That I would have you know.)
Webs of what loom
Filmy as they ?

Some poets' verses,—
Nobody minds them ;
Why should they, pray ?

Yet they are filmy fair.
Moon and sun love them
And the dew alway.

BLUE SPACE.

Blue space, infinite blue ;
Blue that rising stops never,
Lets souls *through* forever.
O the might of such appealing !
Mounts desire, motive, feeling ;
Mounts the spirit evermore ;
Reaches, enters heaven's door.
Blue space, infinite blue.

A PROBLEM.

Dead branch on a living tree,—
Ought such a thing to be ?
Nature, tho', lets it stay
Till it rots quite away.
Dead leaf quickly shed ;
Not so the branch that's dead.
Why the difference ? Sphinx tell.
Yet who but knoweth well
Death and life do not agree.
Cut the dead branch from the tree.
Then, philosophize all day
Nature's inconsistent way,—
To drop the leaf :
The branch let stay.

"What panned them there with all the plain to choose?"
Browning.

Why some live where they do isn't clear,—
 Rusty houses, dingy streets, front and rear;
 Not a grass-blade, not a flower in sight.
 Hundreds live there day and night;
 Pass their years there and their lives
 With their children and their wives.
 Why they live there passing queer.
 Beautiful world, free to choose where; settling
 there.

Many's the mystery
 In human history.
 Rusty houses, dingy streets, front and rear,—
 Why some live where they do isn't clear.

VISIONS.

I have had visions,—
 Oh, the mad height of them !
 Might I climb up to them,
 Good-by the world.
 Could I live up to them,
 I'd be where no dark is,
 I'd be where the lark is,—
 In heaven's light empearled.

But I were no better
 Thus blest with fruition,—
 Beatific condition
 All I've imagined, aspired to sublime.
 My *motive is* in regions elysian
 At the top of my vision ;
And in it there I am.
 So endeth this rhyme.

BED-TIME.

The bed-time hour who misses ?
Of all times surely this is
Time that most cares dismisses,
And brings most sleepy blisses.

After the day is sped,
After its prayers are said,
With pillow for the head,
How sweet the tranquil bed !

Day's toiling sun sets clear,
The evening stars appear.
The bed-time hour draws near,—
Life's bed-time,— never fear.

Time that all cares dismisses,
And brings all dreamy blisses,
Dear as own mother's kiss is.
God's children's bed-time this is.

FALLEN LEAVES OF WILD ROSE.

Once on the brier : now on the ground,
Fallen the blooms are all around,—
Fallen, fading, with'ring away.
Beautiful roses, brief was your day.
Seed of you liveth yet from the brier,
Roses again in prophecy there.

Rose-bush of *rhymes*, your petals are shed.
Leaves of wild roses thick where I tread.
More's in the brier, though, where grew the
 roses,
Else sad summer were when summer closes.



